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CODDLING ANARCHY

BY ERVING WINSLOW

THE Celtic orator who smelt a rat and heard him brewing in the storm, but declared his determination to crush him in the bud, was mixed in metaphor, but clear and single in purpose and possessed obviously by common sense, a quality which seems to have fled the modern world. Philosophical inferences have often been proved by later investigations of the new science of biology to be in fact sound and sane. One of these which seems now in the way of demonstration is the old speculative assumption that madness may befall a nation or group of nations, as genuinely as it seizes upon the individual, and that waves of confusion and passion sometimes deprive them of reason. During the last century such lapses occurred after the French Revolution and to some degree in 1848. We are in the midst of another one, produced by a similar cause, the upsetting of established order and authority. There is no mystery about it. Like the afreet of the Arabian Nights, long confined in the sealed jar, when suddenly let out, the expansion of the spirit fills the air with smoke and darkens the sun.

Common sense, guided by the analogy of experience, might see in the great upheaval of the world today an inevitable reaction, like those of similar previous episodes, only on a vaster scale than ever before, which have followed despotisms grown unbearable and overthrown, license succeeding bondage, and rampant individualism the broken machine; cogs and levers whirring wildly, freed from belts and bearings. After a time the chaos crystallizes somehow, and its unconditioned accidents fall into order, the "divinity" which shapes our "rough-hewn" work into good ends taking a hand. In our mad world there seems no recognition of all this, but only random hypotheses, the one certainty about which is that they are certain not to be permanent. "Self-determination" is

the panacea propounded for the regenerated life of mankind, but self-determination carried out strictly to extremes in every little would-be autonomy is deplored by those who seek international thinking, and, if logically fulfilled, is simple anarchy.

We hailed the arrival of a "bloodless," democratic revolution in Russia after ages of oppression and cruelty, relieved by assassination and insurrection, as the triumphant success of an enslaved people, forgetting all history. After two years' experience of its results, shaping themselves to anarchy, we seem ready to believe with the same mad credulity that Central Europe is immune from the infection, and, while the flames still range higher in Slavia, ignore their awful work, and are blind to their actual spreading into the fields where the Kaisers have made ready the fuel; and self-determination again means anarchy.

As for the Russian situation it is not needful to follow in detail the various sporadic movements with various local and special objectives, under Generals "One-ski" or "T'other-off," growing up as iridescent bubbles swell from a mephitic marsh to a bursting point, and a collapse. He who runs can read the diagnosis of the great epidemic.

Our "intrusion" at first might have been directed largely to aid the "coöperative" societies, eagerly accepting loans and perhaps partnerships from friendly foreigners. How soon and how widely the news of such sympathy would have spread and fructified! No official recognition was possible to a "government" based on confiscation and repudiation, and it was necessarily spurned by it, unless coming from an anarchist state, but it would not have been challenged any more than the British Government was challenged when cargoes of food were sent to famine-suffering Ireland.

How great was the error which failed to apply the remedy in the early stages of it, instead of helplessly watching and by inaction coddling the infant disease in Russia and allowing it to come to the defiant stage of maturity when it has to be challenged, as it had become a formidable adversary and may possess revolutionary Germany, so that the soldiers of America may have to fight a Russo-German-Bolshevik army! Think of it! When, lest offence should be taken by the Lenine-Trotsky group, and through urgency perhaps of those "red radicals" among ourselves who wanted it "recognized" and made so much of the panic terror of Japan hav-

ing part therein, a little force of Americans and our Allies was not allowed to accompany for "police protection" a proposed Mission of Mercy with supplies and food and engineering help for the Russian people!

There is no desire to offer any particular suggestion from "the ranks," but only to exercise the right to see, and to say what he sees, which must be exercised by the citizen if democracy is to be made safe for the world. As Americans it is our right and duty to see and to say how our country is to "function" in the conditions before us, facing them fairly and courageously.

Anarchy is the menace of this great moment in the world's history. There are many claiming to be leaders of opinion, it must be recognized with shame, who believe it is the necessary vestibule to the new freedom and that class-war is inevitable and desirable!

The function of America with her experience, her history and traditions and the place she holds today in the minds of men as true democracy's representative, is to hold them to *via media*, to an orderly democracy, containing as we believe full generative power.

Against king-craft defiance seems needless, and eager eyes are watching and hot tongues denouncing everywhere the grasping plans of capital and privilege, but anarchy now, enfranchised from special war-time restraint, unafraid is ruling in one quarter of the world, is coming to grips in Europe and perhaps even at home, where it has its most wicked and dangerous advocates who have even their organs of publicity among ourselves. These witnesses inspired to coddle anarchy yet can not be brought to do so without misgivings. One of these publications, which in one place demands withdrawal of all military force protecting property and checking, upon its fringes, some of the Russian Terror, because "war has not been declared," in another column suggests that the horrors of it may serve the good turn of warning, which the exposure of the drunken Helot did to Plato's "aristocratic" youth of Athens. Those who edit and support these organs are to be reminded that while Danton, Marat and Robespierre have their apologists, none has been found for "Philippe Egalite."

ERVING WINSLOW.